

What Is Cardioversion?

Cardioversion is a procedure to restore the heart's normal rhythm. It is done in a hospital or surgery center. During the procedure, the heart is given a brief electric shock. This helps the heartbeat become normal again. In most cases, no hospital stay is needed.

What Is an Electrocardiogram?

An **electrocardiogram (ECG)** records heartbeats. An ECG may be done before or after cardioversion. It can show the difference between irregular and normal heart rhythms.



An ECG showing an irregular heartbeat before cardioversion.



An ECG showing a heartbeat restored to normal with cardioversion.

Back on Track

The day after your procedure, try to take it easy. Take medicine as directed. Call your healthcare provider right away if you feel palpitations, skipped beats, or rapid heartbeat. These are signs that abnormal heartbeat has returned.

Call **911** if you have fainted or feel faint, or if you have tightness in your chest. Also call if you have new problems with speech, vision, or feel weak.

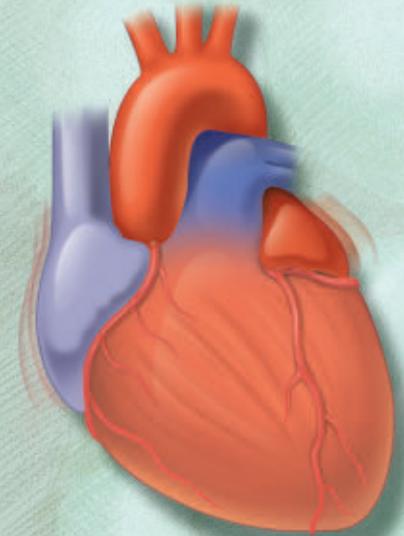


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CARDIOVERSION



**Restoring Your
Normal Heartbeat**

Before Your Procedure

- Tell your healthcare provider what over-the-counter and prescription medicines, herbal remedies, vitamins, and supplements you are taking.
- Take medicine as directed. Your healthcare provider may prescribe anticoagulants (blood thinners) for a few weeks. They help prevent blood clots from forming.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of cardioversion.
- Your healthcare provider will review the consent form and answer any questions you have.
- Don't eat or drink anything for as long as instructed before your procedure.
- Follow any other instructions you are given.
- Arrange for an adult to drive you home after the procedure.



Stop eating and drinking as instructed before the procedure. If you've been told to continue with medicine, take it with only small sips of water.

During Your Procedure

- Small pads (electrodes) are placed on your chest to record your heartbeat at all times.
- An intravenous (IV) line is placed in your arm. This line gives you medicine to make you sleep during the procedure (sedation). This keeps you comfortable and free from pain during the procedure.
- You will be given oxygen through a soft plastic tube in your nose.
- Pads will be placed on your chest and back. The oxygen tube will be temporarily stopped. A very brief electric shock is given through the pads. You won't feel the shock.
- Your heartbeat is watched to make sure the normal rhythm has been restored.



After Your Procedure

- You'll be monitored until you are fully awake. Then you'll be able to sit up, walk, and eat.
- In most cases, you'll be able to go home after the sedation wears off. This usually takes a few hours.
- For a day, the skin on your chest may feel a little sore, like a mild sunburn.
- Don't drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours after the procedure.



Be sure to have someone else drive you home.